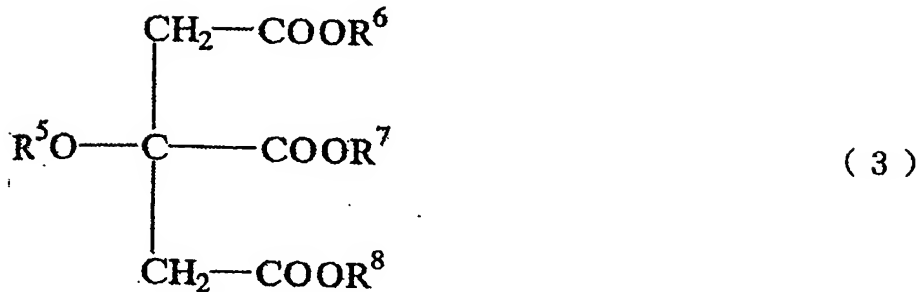


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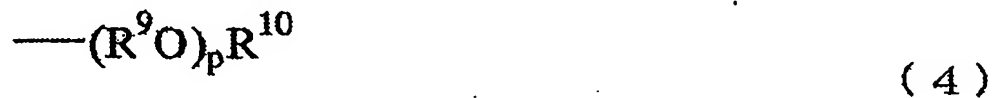
CLAIMS

1. (Deleted)

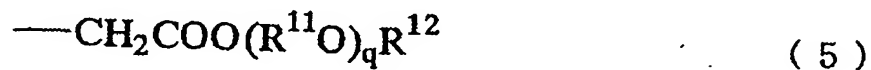
2. An ester compound represented by formula (3)



5 wherein R⁵ is H, a C₁₋₅ aliphatic acyl group or a C₆₋₁₂ aromatic acyl group; R⁶, R⁷ and R⁸ each represent a group of formula (4) or (5)



wherein R⁹ is a C₁₋₆ alkylene group; R¹⁰ is a C₁₋₁₀ straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C₆₋₁₂ aryl group, a C₇₋₁₅ arylalkyl group or a C₇₋₁₅ alkylaryl group; and p is an integer from 0 to 6; and



wherein R¹¹ is a C₁₋₆ alkylene group; R¹² is a C₁₋₁₀ straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C₆₋₁₂ aryl group, a C₇₋₁₅ arylalkyl group or a C₇₋₁₅ alkylaryl group; and q is

an integer from 0 to 6;

with the proviso that the compound wherein R^6 , R^7 and R^8 are the same is excluded.

3. A plasticizer for biodegradable aliphatic
5 polyester resins, the plasticizer comprising an ester of
an aliphatic polybasic acid with at least two members
selected from the group consisting of alcohols and ether
alcohols.

4. A plasticizer for biodegradable aliphatic
10 polyester resins according to claim 3, wherein the ester
is a compound represented by formula (1)

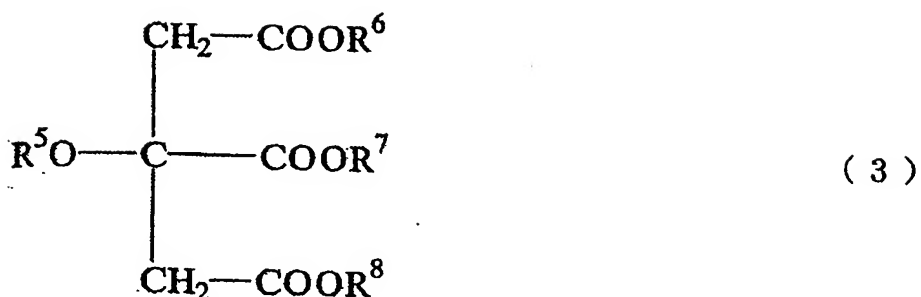


wherein R^1 and R^2 are different from each other and each
represents a group of formula (2)



15 wherein R^3 is a C_{1-6} alkylene group; R^4 is a C_{1-10} straight-
or branched-chain alkyl group, a C_{6-12} aryl group, a C_{7-15}
arylalkyl group or a C_{7-15} alkylaryl group; m is an integer
from 0 to 8, and n is an integer from 0 to 6.

20 5. A plasticizer for biodegradable aliphatic
polyester resins according to claim 3, wherein the ester
is a compound represented by formula (3)

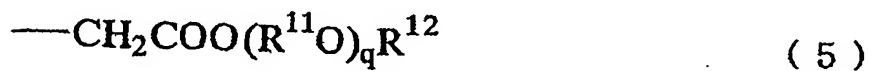


wherein R^5 is H, a C_{1-5} aliphatic acyl group or a C_{6-12} aromatic acyl group, and R^6 , R^7 and R^8 each represent a group of formula (4) or (5)



5

wherein R^9 is a C_{1-6} alkylene group; R^{10} is a C_{1-10} straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C_{6-12} aryl group, a C_{7-15} arylalkyl group or a C_{7-15} alkylaryl group; and p is an integer from 0 to 6; and



10

wherein R^{11} is a C_{1-6} alkylene group; R^{12} is a C_{1-10} straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C_{6-12} aryl group, a C_{7-15} arylalkyl group or a C_{7-15} alkylaryl group; and q is an integer from 0 to 6;

15

with the proviso that the compound wherein R^6 , R^7 and R^8 are the same is excluded.

6. (Amended) Use of an ester compound
represented by formula (1)



wherein R^1 and R^2 are different from each other and each
5 represents a group of formula (2)



wherein R^3 is a C_{1-6} alkylene group; R^4 is a C_{1-10} straight-
or branched-chain alkyl group, a C_{6-12} aryl group, C_{7-15}
arylalkyl group or a C_{7-15} alkylaryl group; m is an integer
10 from 0 to 8, and n is an integer from 0 to 6,

as a plasticizer for biodegradable aliphatic polyester
resins.

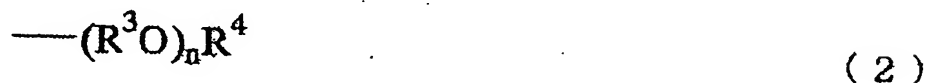
7. Use of a compound according to claim 2 as a
plasticizer for biodegradable aliphatic polyester resins.

15 8. A biodegradable resin composition comprising
(i) a biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin and (ii) a
plasticizer comprising an ester of an aliphatic polybasic
acid with at least two members selected from the group
consisting of alcohols and ether alcohols.

20 9. A biodegradable resin composition according
to claim 8, wherein the plasticizer is a compound
represented by formula (1)

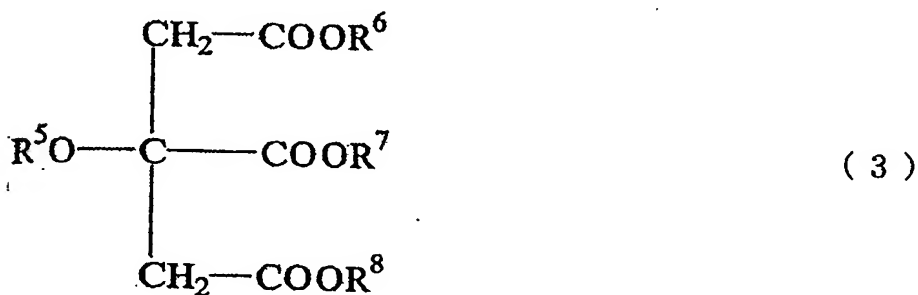


wherein R^1 and R^2 are different from each other and each represents a group of formula (2)



5 wherein R^3 is a C_{1-6} alkylene group; R^4 is a C_{1-10} straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C_{6-12} aryl group, a C_{7-15} arylalkyl group or a C_{7-15} alkylaryl group; m is an integer from 0 to 8; and n is an integer from 0 to 6.

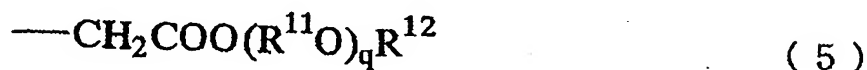
10. A biodegradable resin composition
10 according to claim 8, wherein the plasticizer is a compound represented by formula (3)



wherein R^5 is H, a C_{1-5} aliphatic acyl group or a C_{6-12} aromatic acyl group, and R^6 , R^7 and R^8 each represent a
15 group of formula (4) or (5)



wherein R^9 is a C_{1-6} alkylene group; R^{10} is a C_{1-10} straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C_{6-12} aryl group, a C_{7-15} arylalkyl group or a C_{7-15} alkylaryl group; and p is an integer from 0 to 6; and



5

wherein R^{11} is a C_{1-6} alkylene group; R^{12} is a C_{1-10} straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C_{6-12} aryl group, a C_{7-15} arylalkyl group or a C_{7-15} alkylaryl group; and q is an integer from 0 to 6;

10 with the proviso that the compound wherein R^6 , R^7 and R^8 are the same is excluded.

11. A biodegradable resin composition according to any one of claims 8, 9 and 10, wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is at least one
15 member selected from the group consisting of resins obtainable by condensation of hydroxycarboxylic acid(s) and resins obtainable by condensation of aliphatic dicarboxylic acid(s) and aliphatic diol(s).

12. A resin composition according to claim 11,
20 wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is a poly(lactic acid).

13. A resin composition according to claim 11, wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is

polybutylene succinate, polybutylene succinate adipate or a mixture thereof.

14. A method for plasticizing a biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin, the method comprising adding to
5 a biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin an ester compound represented by formula (1)



wherein R^1 and R^2 are different from each other and each represents a group of formula (2)



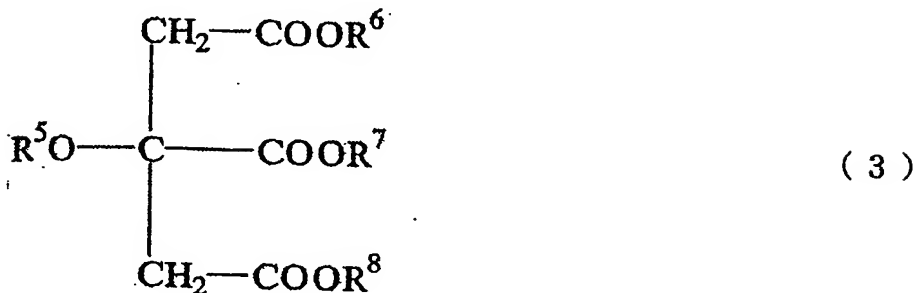
10 wherein R^3 is a C_{1-6} alkylene group; R^4 is a C_{1-10} straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C_{6-12} aryl group, C_{7-15} arylalkyl group or a C_{7-15} alkylaryl group; m is an integer from 0 to 8, and n is an integer from 0 to 6.

15 15. A method according to claim 14, wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is a poly(lactic acid).

16. A method according to claim 14, wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is polybutylene
20 succinate, polybutylene succinate adipate or a mixture thereof.

17. A method for plasticizing a biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin, the method comprising adding to

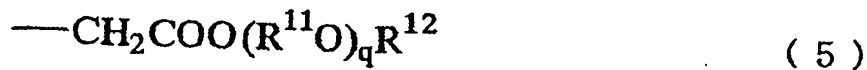
a biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin an ester compound represented by formula (3)



wherein R⁵ is H, a C₁₋₅ aliphatic acyl group or a C₆₋₁₂ aromatic acyl group; and R⁶, R⁷ and R⁸ each represent a group of formula (4) or (5)



wherein R⁹ is a C₁₋₆ alkylene group; R¹⁰ is a C₁₋₁₀ straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C₆₋₁₂ aryl group, a C₇₋₁₅ arylalkyl group or a C₇₋₁₅ alkylaryl group; and p is an integer from 0 to 6; and



wherein R¹¹ is a C₁₋₆ alkylene group; R¹² is a C₁₋₁₀ straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C₆₋₁₂ aryl group, a C₇₋₁₅ arylalkyl group or a C₇₋₁₅ alkylaryl group; and q is an integer from 0 to 6;

with the proviso that the compound wherein R^6 ,
 R^7 and R^8 are the same is excluded.

18. A method according to claim 17, wherein the
biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is a poly(lactic
5 acid).

19. A method according to claim 17, wherein the
biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is polybutylene
succinate, polybutylene succinate adipate or a mixture
thereof.